

FIRE WATCH PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

The continued use and occupancy of any structure or business is dependent on all installed fire protection systems being maintained in an operational mode. Failure of any installed system to operate places the occupancy in jeopardy. Protection of persons and property against the hazards of fire is a management responsibility. The requirements of this procedure are intended to aid the management in the selection, requirements, duties and training of individuals used to perform a fire watch when systems are down and a fire watch is required to protect personnel and property from fire.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The management of a business or property shall supervise the fire watch service or designate a responsible person to provide supervision of fire watch. A fire watch is a 24 hour requirement, the same as the alarm or sprinkler provided for the structure. If the supervisor is to be absent from the site a clear line of responsibility must be given to the fire watch in writing.

Fire watch personnel shall be employees of management or outside firms such as private security firms on a contract basis. Where permitted by the County the fire watch service may be permitted to be supplemented in part by an approved protective signaling system (alarm).

PROCEDURE

A sufficient number of fire watch personnel must be assigned to accomplish fire watch service throughout the structure or site as applicable. Fire watch personnel may perform other duties assigned by management as long as the fire watch duty is the primary function and the other duties do not interfere with the fire watch.

Fire watch personnel must be familiar with the property to be protected or escorted thru the property to be made familiar with the site or structure so when reporting a fire they may give proper directions and information to the fire department switchboard. They shall become familiar with manufacturing switches, if applicable, all electrical shut off devices and main power cut-offs as well shut-offs for gas, oil, process water and any other areas that may be either hazardous to fire personnel or add fuel to any fire situation. Fire watches must know the location of any fire extinguisher, sprinkler system controls, hose connections and all fire protection equipment in the structure or site.

Fire watch personnel shall be made familiar by management of all hazardous material locations and dangerous processes within the structure and site along with storage areas for products that add fuel to combustion.

PRE EMERGENCY PLANS

Fire watch personnel shall be made familiar with any pre-emergency plans and emergency plans that exist for the structure. Fire watch personnel must know their responsibility under any emergency plan in effect.

FIRE ALARMS BY FIRE WATCH

If fire watch personnel discover a fire their first response is to notify the fire department communication center by calling 911, they will be required to report the exact location of the fire and the extent of fire involvement. Only after reporting a fire to the fire department may they attempt to use fire extinguishing equipment in the structure to extinguish the fire.

(OVER)

GENERAL

A fire watch shall make rounds of the structure/s and grounds at intervals determined by the County Fire Inspector. Each site or building may require different timed rounds, normally an hourly round should be sufficient. Where there are special conditions such as hazardous material storage or processes involved these may require additional rounds by the fire watch. A book or record of the rounds, times of rounds and conditions noted for attention must be kept by all fire watch personnel and these records maintained by management for fire inspector review when needed.

the first round of a fire watch should begin as soon as possible, during the rounds the fire watch should make a thorough inspection of the building or spaces assigned to him/ her noting at a minimum the following:

1. Outside doors & windows are closed and locked, fire doors are closed and not chained or tampered with to prevent exiting the structure.
2. All oily waste rags, paint residue, rubbish etc are in proper closed containers or removed from the building;
3. All fire apparatus such as extinguisher, hose lines etc are in place and not obstructed;
4. Aisles and exitways are clear and not obstructed;
5. Motors and machines not required to be running are shut off;
6. All offices, conference rooms, file rooms shall be checked for careless discarded smoking materials;
7. All gas and electric heaters or other heating equipment checked regularly;
8. All hazardous processes or manufacturing process are in safe conditions, the temperature of driers, annealing furnaces and similar equipment that continue to operate during the night are visually inspected;
9. Flammable and combustible materials are properly stored in containers or in storage areas;
10. All sprinkler valves required to be open are chained in the open position and panels indicating sprinkler or fire prevention equipment are operating safely with no trouble lights or alarm lights on;
11. Particular attention should be given to any areas of new construction or alteration areas for fire.

Fire Watch personnel shall report promptly any conditions that need immediate attention, reports of this nature should be covered by written management directions. Conditions that appear fire hazards should be reported and noted on the fire watch hourly report of rounds. Fire watch personnel shall conduct themselves in such a way as not to interfere with the normal activities of the business and they must be capable of performing their tasks and not be under the influence of alcohol or intoxicants at any time while on duty as a fire watch.

Management should provide the fire watch with written instructions on rounds, notification of personnel and names of supervisory personnel and ways to contact supervisory personnel. Should you have any questions or need assistance please contact the Chief Fire Inspector at 321-1130, Extension 7338.